

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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SUBJECT: PANEL DISCUSSION OF PANAMA CANAL TREATY, ASSOCIATION  
OF PANAMANIAN COMPANY EXECUTIVES (APEDE)

SUMMARY: APEDE HELD A PANEL DISCUSSION OF THE CANAL TREATY  
ON SEPTEMBER 22. MUCH OF THE COMMENTARY WAS A COMPARISON  
OF THE 1977 DOCUMENT WITH THE UNRATIFIED 1967 CANAL TREATY.  
MOST SPEAKERS INDICATED THAT THE PRESENT TREATY IS LESS  
ADVANTAGEOUS TO PANAMA THAN THE 1967 ONE. A REPRESENTATIVE  
OF THE ANTI-TREATY "INDEPENDENT LAWYERS MOVEMENT" ATTACKED  
THE TREATIES, ESPECIALLY THE NEUTRALITY TREATY. END SUMMARY.

1. THE ASSOCIATION OF PANAMANIAN COMPANY EXECUTIVES (APEDE)  
HELD A PANEL DISCUSSION OF THE PANAMA CANAL TREATY QUESTION  
AT THE EL PANAMA HOTEL ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22. PANELISTS  
INCLUDED APEDE PRESIDENT LEO GUTIERREZ; DR. ROBERTO ALEMAN,  
A PRIVATE ATTORNEY, FORMER AMBASSADOR TO THE U.S. AND ONE  
OF THE 1967 TREATY NEGOTIATORS; DR. CARLOS SUCRE CALVO, A  
LAWYER, MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT AND JUSTICE IN THE MID-  
FORTIES, AND A NEGOTIATOR OF THE 1955 REMON-EISENHOWER  
TREATY; DR. CARLOS AROSEMENA ARIAS, ATTORNEY, ONE-TIME  
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ALTERNATE MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF FOREIGN  
RELATIONS; AND DR. DIOGENES AROSEMENA GRIMALDO, A  
PRIVATE ATTORNEY AND SPOKESMAN FOR THE INDEPENDENT  
LAWYERS MOVEMENT. ALSO ATTENDING THE APEDE MEETING  
BUT NOT PARTICIPATING WAS 1977 TREATY NEGOTIATOR DR.  
DIOGENES DE LA ROSA.

2. THE DISCUSSION OF THE TREATY WAS MIXED PRO AND CON AND WAS, FOR THE MOST PART, A CRITICAL COMPARISON OF THE 1977 TREATY WITH THE UNRATIFIED 1967 CANAL TREATY. MEMBER OF THE INDEPENDENT LAWYERS MOVEMENT, ATTORNEY DR. DIOGENES AROSEMENA GRIMALDO COMPLAINED THE TREATY LEGALIZES U.S. INTERVENTION ON THE ISTHMUS AFTER THE END OF THE PRESENT CENTURY. "WE ARE LEGALIZING THE PRESENCE OF THE UNITED STATES AFTER THE YEAR 2000, AND THE MILITARY ROLE TO BE PLAYED BY PANAMA WILL BE THAT OF A MILITARY ALLIANCE WITH THE UNITED STATES, THAT WAS REJECTED IN OUR COUNTRY IN THE YEAR 1926." HE SAID FURTHER THAT THE NEUTRALITY TREATY "HAD TECHNICAL DEFECTS AND DEFECTS IN CONSTRUCTION," AND ADDED THAT IT WAS A PROFOUNDLY WEAK DOCUMENT, WITHOUT JURIDICAL VALUE, AND WITH NO FORCE OF OBLIGATION FOR SIGNATORY NATIONS.

3. PANELIST ALEMAN AGREED WITH ESCOBAR BETHANCOURT'S STATEMENT "THE TREATY HAS SOME GOOD, SOME BAD, AND SOME UGLINESS." COMPARING IT WITH THE 1967 TREATY, HE COMPLAINED THAT UNLIKE THE LATTER, THE PRESENT TREATY DOES NOT BIND BOTH PARTIES TO ARBITRATION. HE WAS ALSO UNHAPPY BECAUSE THE 1977 DOCUMENT DOES NOT PROVIDE FOR THE CANAL ENTITY ADMINISTRATORS TO BE APPOINTED BY AN INTERNATIONAL BODY AS THE 1967 TREATY STIPULATED.

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4. DR. SUCRE CALVO APPLAUDED THE 1977 TREATIES BECAUSE "THEY PERMIT THE MAINTAINING OF GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN BOTH COUNTRIES AND THE EFFICIENT FUNCTIONING OF THE CANAL. HE AGREED WITH ALEMAN, HOWEVER, THAT THE 1967 TREATY WAS MORE FAVORABLE TO PANAMA. HE WAS HAPPY THAT THE UNITED STATES UNDER THE TERMS OF THE NEUTRALITY TREATY WOULD GUARANTEE THE DEFENSE OF THE CANAL BECAUSE PANAMA ALONE, IN CASE OF CONFLICT, WOULD BE UNABLE TO DEFEND THE WATERWAY.

5. DR. CARLOS AROSEMENA ARIAS OBSERVED THAT THE TREATY "WILL NOT CHANGE THE CAUSES OF THE ECONOMIC STAGNATION AND THE DOCUMENTS ARE NOT A PANACEA FOR THE ECONOMIC SOLUTION OF THE COUNTRY." HE LAMENTED THAT THE SIGNING OF THE TREATY HAD NOT PROVEN "A TRUE FORCE FOR NATIONAL UNITY," BUT "IT IS NOW TIME FOR GOOD SENSE AND PEACE TO REIGN SO THAT THIS TREATY MAY BE AN INSTRUMENT OF BENEFIT FOR ALL OF US."

6. COMMENT: APEDE, WHICH STILL COUNTS AMONG ITS MEMBERSHIP A NUMBER OF PROMINENT EXILES OUSTED IN JANUARY 1976, MAINTAINS A MODUS VIVENDI WITH THE GOP,

NEITHER PARTY VERY FOND OF THE OTHER. THE MEETING IS  
LIKE MANY HELD BY GROUPS TO DISCUSS THE TREATY. IT  
SERVED AS ANOTHER PUBLIC FORUM FOR THE INDEPENDENT  
LAWYERS MOVEMENT, WHICH HAS EMERGED AS THE CHIEF  
ANTI-TREATY GROUP OUTSIDE OF MILITANT LEFTIST STUDENT  
GROUPS. THE MEETING GOT LEAD-STORY COVERAGE IN THE  
STAR & HERALD AND ESTRELLA, BUT NO MENTION IN THE  
GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED ERSÁ PRESS.

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## Message Attributes

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APEDE HELD A PANEL DISCUSSION OF THE CANA  
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